

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2015

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman,

This Friday, July 27th, Chief Negotiators are gathering in Maui for the latest round of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations ahead of a ministerial that is set to commence immediately following their meeting. It is our understanding that the Administration is seeking to conclude negotiations at this meeting. While there are many outstanding issues that negotiators and ministers must come to an agreement on, we urge you to uphold our domestic catfish inspection laws during trade negotiations.

Public health and food safety must be a top priority in TPP negotiations. Americans depend on government to ensure the safety of their food supply. To that end, on July 8, 2015 the House Appropriations Committee unanimously accepted a provision in support of United States catfish inspection laws.

Nearly 79 percent of the catfish and catfish-like imports are from Vietnam. Researchers in a 2013 study found that 100 percent of Vietnamese pangasius catfish farms used numerous substances that are banned by the FDA.^[1]

A 2012 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that imported fish were the most common source of food borne illness outbreaks from imported food between 2005 and 2010. In addition, nearly 45 percent of the imported food originated in Asia.^[2] Imported catfish and its products should meet the same public health and safety requirements as U.S. catfish.

Our government is responsible for maintaining the safety of our nation's food supply – including seafood. We urge you to adhere to our promise to protect American consumers.

^[1] Rico, Andreu et al. "Use of veterinary medicines, feed additives and probiotics in four major internationally traded aquaculture species farmed in Asia." *Aquaculture*, Vol. 412-413. 2013.

^[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2012. CDC research shows outbreaks linked to imported foods increasing [Press release]. Retrieved online: http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2012/p0314_foodborne.html.

Furthermore, we ask you to make a public statement of your commitment to a negotiating position that will not enter the U.S. into any trade agreement that will conflict with our domestic catfish inspection laws.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress